

THE GENUINE
NARRATIVE
Of the Life and Transactions

OF
Major MAURICE KEATING, *K*
The noted PIRATE and MURDERER,

Who was executed on MONDAY the 27th of DE-
CEMBER, 1784, at Cuckold's Point, near Port-
Royal, in the Island of Jamaica.

Which contains a particular account of his being ship-
wrecked and reduced to the greatest necessities, and after-
wards being concerned with three others in seizing the
schooner Friendship, Captain William Lewis, bound from
Virginia to St. Thomas's, in which they had agreed to
take their passage, with the fixt resolution to seize the
vessel the first opportunity, and to murder all the persons
belonging to her, without distinction; in which diabolical
scheme, they too well succeeded.—On the Captain, Mate,
and particularly on a Mr. Wilkinson, who was also a pas-
senger, they exercised the most unheard-of cruelty, although
the unhappy gentleman begged earnestly for his life in the
most pathetic manner.—The particulars of the extraordi-
nary manner of his being discovered, and his confession of
the whole transaction before the magistrates at Kingston,
—Likewise an account of his behaviour at the place of exe-
cution, and a particular narration of his life, which he
delivered to a gentleman the night before he suffered.

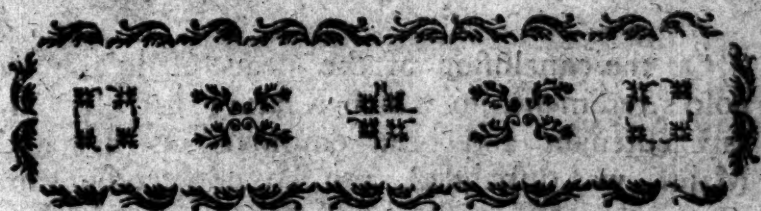
N. B. This NARRATIVE is published as a caution to
captains of ships to be particularly careful what passengers
they take on board; and is one of the most bloody scenes
of villainy ever heard of since the time of the noted pirate
Blackbeard.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A True and Faithful ACCOUNT of the
LOSS of the Brigantine TYRRELL,
And the uncommon Hardships suffered by the Crew.

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THE GENUINE
NARRATIVE
OF
MAURICE KEATING.

MAURICE KEATING was a native of Munster in Ireland. He was born of creditable parents, who gave him a good education, and being of an enterprising disposition, he went to America to seek his fortune. He arrived with General Arnold's army at New-York, where he procured a commission to raise a corps, which being nearly completed, the conclusion of the general peace put a period to his prospects, and the troops evacuated the American territories.

On the conclusion of the peace General Arnold's regiment, in which Keating had served as Lieutenant and been employed as Brigade Major, was disbanded, and he not having an opportunity of raising a sufficient number of men to entitle him to the provision made for other officers who had, was discharged without half-pay or any other kind of support.

Having a brother at Santa Cruz, he made a voyage to that place with a view of settling there, but his brother fitting him out and giving him a considerable venture, he set off again for America. The vessel in which he embarked was, unfortunately for him, cast away off New London, and he lost every article except the cloaths he had on. From New London he went to New York, in hopes of meeting with some of his brother officers and getting a little assistance, but in this he was also disappointed, the army having evacuated that place before he arrived there; after which he travelled about the continent of America in the greatest distress imaginable, enquiring for employment wherever he thought it likely to get any, but to no purpose.

In this distressed situation he went to Norfolk in Virginia, where he became acquainted with Benjamin Johnson, Joseph Twentymen, and one Hughes, with whom he had several meetings, at one of which it was proposed by Hughes to procure passages on board the schooner Friendship,

ship, then lying off Johnson's house, commanded by William Lewis, and bound to St. Thomas's; to seize upon the said schooner when an opportunity offered, and to murder all the persons belonging to her without distinction; after some deliberation, the parties unanimously consented to this heinous and damnable proposal. About eight days afterwards, having previously agreed for their passages, they embarked on board the schooner, and sailed the same day.

About ten o'clock in the evening of the ninth day after their departure, Keating, Johnson, Twentyman and Hughes, went up to Mr. Chadwick the mate, who was then at the helm, and presenting a loaded pistol to his breast, told him that the vessel was theirs, and that he must go forwards, upon which Hughes bound and gagged the unhappy man, and conducted him to the fore-castle; whereupon Johnson directed Twentyman to take the helm and steer the vessel, which office he readily accepted. The other three villains then secured Wm. Price, Charles Brown, a negro man named Jack, all fore-mast men, whom Hughes immediately proposed to throw overboard, but his associates being averse to this advice, it was abandoned. Keating, Johnson and Hughes then went into the cabin, and tied and gagged Captain Lewis and Mr. Wilkinson, whom they left in that situation until morning.

During

During the remainder of the night Twentyman steered, while his bloody associates guarded the prisoners. At the approach of day-light, Keating, Johnson and Hughes went into the cabin, and dragged Captain Lewis and Mr. Wilkinson to the quarter deck, gagged and bound as aforesaid; whereupon Hughes seized upon Captain Lewis, led him to the main-chains, and instantly threw him overboard; upon which this active and obdurate villain returned to the quarter deck and seized upon Mr. Wilkinson, who by some means or other got the gag out of his mouth, and begged in the most moving terms for his life; but the stoney-hearted villains, deaf to every sensation of pity, heard his piercing intreaties without remorse, and, in attempting to plunge their victim into the ocean, entangled his legs in the shrouds, upon which Hughes stabbed him with a sword in several places; but this not being sufficient to break his hold, the other villains came to the assistance of Hughes, and presently effected their purpose, by precipitating the mangled carcase of poor Wilkinson into the ocean.

The villains then returned to the quarter-deck, their hands streaming with the blood of the innocent, and threw Mr. Chadwick into the sea. They then untied the two foremast men and the negro to work the vessel, first administering unto them a solemn oath on the Bible to be true and faithful, and gave directions to
Twentyman,

Twentyman, who ordered and acted as navigator, to shape a course to the island of Antigua.

About sixteen days afterwards, Hughes having rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the pirates, and especially to the two foremast men, whom he had cruelly beaten upon several trivial occasions, the former gave directions to the latter to throw Hughes overboard, which they accordingly put in execution, after knocking him on the head with an axe.

To complete the tragedy, Twentyman the next day called the negro Jack to the quarter-deck, and ordered him to throw a bucket of water to wash the same, which mandate the poor negro immediately obeyed, and while he was in the execution of it Twentyman flung him into the sea, with the concurrence of Keating and Johnson.

It was thirty days after they had got possession of the vessel before they made Antigua, but in a consultation they thought it prudent not to go in; and it being the unanimous opinion that a French port was the more safe and secure, they bore away for Port Louis in the island of Guadaloupe, where Keating went on shore, in the assumed character of a merchant, to dispose of the cargo, and would have done so, but, on his return to the vessel, being informed that Charles Brown, one of the foremast
men,

men, had jumped overboard and got into a fishing canoe, which carried him on shore, Keating and his companions thought it advisable, for fear of a discovery, to steer for St. Martin's, where being arrived, they all three went ashore, staid about twenty four hours, disposed of that part of the cargo which was upon deck, and discharged William Price, the other foremast man, who previously received from Keating forty dollars, as a compensation for his trouble, and partly to prevent his disclosing what he had seen on board.

They now shaped their course for St. Domingo, on the south side of Hispaniola, where Keating, for fear of being discovered by his companions, thought proper to leave the vessel, and after wishing them success he debarked, taking with him a free mulatto boy whom they had shipped at St. Martin's, his trunk, and whatever else he could find on board the vessel that might be of service to him, and landed at Niva, a Spanish port in Hispaniola. He afterwards crossed the country to Port-au-Prince, where and at St. Mark's he staid three weeks, going by the title of Captain Carney.

A short time after he embarked at St. Jeremie, on board a French brig bound for Jamaica, and arrived at Kingston on Monday the 8th of November, when he took up his quarters in a lodging house; but finding his situation noisy

noisy and expensive, he removed to Mrs. Debois's in Rum-lane, at which place he was discovered in a most extraordinary manner.

The unerring hand of Divine Providence was so conspicuous in the detection of this inhuman monster, that we cannot resist the impulse of laying a proper statement thereof before the public :

A gentleman who was a lodger at Mrs. Debois's, having learnt that a sick stranger, who called himself Captain Carney, had been brought to the house the evening before, determined, from motives of humanity, to enquire after his health. Accordingly he went into the sick man's room, seated himself by his bed-side after the usual salutations, and entered into a conversation with him ; during the course of which, Keating, in great agitation, asked the other if some pirates had not been lately apprehended and committed to prison ; upon which the visitor replied in the affirmative, and observed with great energy, that they were the most bloody and abandoned miscreants that ever were upon record ! which made such an impression on Keating, that he instantly exclaimed, after striking his forehead with great violence and falling into an universal tremor—" My God ! what a pain I have got in my head, and deadly sickness at my heart ! For God's sake, Sir, send for a barber, that I may get my head shaved, as I am sure it will abate the fever in my distracted brain."

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The stranger, whose suspicions were awakened by this extraordinary behaviour, after measuring the man from head to foot with his eye, retired out of the room and referred to a newspaper for Keating's description, which having removed every doubt of his being the pirate in question, he gave notice to a magistrate, who issued a warrant against the villain, and gave it to a party of the town-guard to execute.

They immediately proceeded to the house, and taxed Keating with his guilt, which at first he strenuously denied, but upon one of the party reading aloud the name of J. Wilkinson at full length on the tail of his shirt, which hung out of his breeches, he again fell into a state of trepidation, sunk down upon the bed in great agony, confessed he was the identical person they were in search of, and was carried to the Court-house, where he underwent an examination of three hours and a half, in which he made a full and ample confession of his guilt, and at the end thereof was committed close prisoner to the common gaol.

The pirates had adopted the most sanguinary and atrocious system of depredation that is to be paralleled since the days of the infamous *Blackbeard*, who was the terror of the age in which he lived. This pirate committed the most daring robberies on the seas that were ever known in the memory of man, and every person on board the vessels he plundered was sure

to suffer death, or, what was worse, the most excruciating tortures. His common practice was to wear cartridges of gunpowder in the whiskers of his beard, and occasionally fire them off, from which he derived the name of Blackbeard, though his proper name was Teach. He was so brutal even to his own ship's crew, that he used to confine them in his cabin, and burn brimstone till they were almost suffocated, to give them, what he called, a description of hell.

Keating and his companions were under the most solemn engagement to each other, which a spirit of obdurate villainy and desperation could suggest, to rob every vessel they could possibly surprize, and murder every soul on board, without distinction of age or sex; but it was a happy circumstance that they met with no other prey than the schooner Friendship, the fate of which has been fully related.

An American gentleman paid a visit to Johnson, the pirate; and, upon being introduced to him, asked him the following question: "Don't you remember to have seen me in Virginia, Johnson?" To which he replied, "Yes; I think I have seen your face before." The gentleman then said, "You surely must recollect that I agreed with Captain Lewis to go to the island of St. Thomas, on board the schooner Friendship, but by an unforeseen accident was balked in my intentions."

Upon which the unhappy wretch had the grace to reply, " I do recollect the circumstance perfectly, and you may think yourself exceedingly happy that you missed of your passage; for, had you really embarked on board the vessel, you would certainly have been murdered with the rest of the sufferers."

The narrow escape of this gentleman, by missing his passage, is one of the many instances of the goodness of Divine Providence to mankind, and ought to be a lesson to us not to be perplexed at seeming disappointments, which, if they had not happened, might have proved fatal in their consequences. He might, to be sure, meet with some temporary loss or inconvenience by his being disappointed; but, considering how inevitably he must have lost his life with the rest of the unhappy victims to the barbarity of those merciless wretches, how happy must his situation of mind be, and how grateful must be his thanks to God, for his preservation by an unforeseen incident, which at first might occasion him much uneasiness.

Keating was executed at a place called Cuckold's Point, near Port-Royal in Jamaica, and afterwards his body was suspended in chains to a lofty gibbet.

He was not more exemplary for his penitence and contrition, than singularly ample and ingenious

nuous in the confession he made before the magistrates at the Court-house, which has made some small compensation for his inhuman barbarity.

At the place of execution he met his fate with uncommon resignation and fortitude, and told the surrounding multitude, after he was tied up, that he was not afraid of death, but courted the grim tyrant as a relief from all his sorrows. He then turned to the executioner, and forbid him to take away the ladder, saying that he would jump off himself when he was ready, which he accordingly did about two minutes afterwards.

THE night before his execution, he most solemnly declared to a gentleman who went to see him in prison, that the following out-lines of his life were strictly true; and which, coming from his own mouth, and corresponding with the former narration, we think proper to lay before our readers, as being more circumstantial in many particulars.

The unfortunate Maurice Keating was several years a volunteer in the King's army in America, and afterwards a Lieutenant in Arnold's regiment when that officer joined the British; was afterwards made Brigade Major, and also held his Lieutenancy.

He

He had been in nine different actions, and fought both under Lord Cornwallis and Lord Rawdon; and was employed by General Clinton, three different times, to carry letters backwards and forwards, in a whale boat, to Lord Cornwallis, when besieged in York-Town. General Clinton also sent him with a letter to Major André, previous to his execution. On this occasion he pretended to desert from our service, enlisted with the Americans, and delivered the letter to Major André, who knew him, and two days afterwards returned to New-York.

General Clinton's recall put a stop to the great promises he had made Keating for these hazardous services, whose expectations were now totally frustrated; for on Arnold's regiment being disbanded, he was discharged without half-pay, or any other support, as has been mentioned before.

He then made a voyage to Santa Cruz, where he had a brother, who trusted him with a considerable venture to go to America; but unfortunately the vessel in which he embarked was wrecked off New-London, and he lost every thing but the cloaths upon his back. He went from New-London to New-York, in hopes of meeting with assistance from some of his brother officers; but the army having evacuated that city, he proceeded to Virginia, where he arrived without money or friends and experienced variety of wretchedness, his whole wardrobe being reduced

duced to a jacket, a shirt and a pair of frowlers, and without shoes or stockings. In Norfolk he applied at every store, shop, &c. for employment of any kind, but without effect.

It was here he fell in company with Twentyman and Hughes, who carried him to Johnson's house and gave him victuals and drink, not having eat any thing for thirty-six hours before. Here he remained some days at their expence, and at length Twentyman, although he had upwards of forty pounds in money and goods, and a large stock of goods, first proposed to Keating to seize upon a sloop, and to carry her off, which proposal they all came into; but finding some difficulty in the execution of their project, they pitched upon the schooner Friendship as more likely for their purpose, and were instigated by Johnson's wife to murder the innocent persons on board, who recommended to them at their departure, to do their business effectually, and to leave no tell-tales.

Ever since the commission of the bloody tragedy, Keating declared he laboured under the most terrible agitation of mind, that the hell in his own bosom made the near approach of death comfortable to him, and that he resigned his life with pleasure, hoping that would be some satisfaction to mankind for the atrocious crime he had committed.

From Keating's account of his services, the disappointment of his expectations, his shipwreck and the terrible difficulties he underwent in consequence of it, the humane breast must feel sensibly for his misfortunes; but when we reflect how soon he joined himself with an abandoned set of men, who induced him to commit the worst of all crimes, that of MURDER, our pity must be suspended, and give the criminal up to that justice which such daring outrages deserve.

END OF KEATING'S NARRATIVE.



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